

State Department spells out as “arbitrary detention,” “forced disappearances,” and “extrajudicial killings”; and Cuba, whose government exports repressive tools to countries like Venezuela; and, of course, the People’s Republic of China itself, where the hypocrisy stretches from repression in Hong Kong to internment and torture of the Uighur people in Xinjiang.

The Biden administration has advertised a foreign policy focused on human rights and democracy and quite publicly announced its intention to rejoin the U.N. Human Rights Council. Fine, let Burma and Hong Kong and Xinjiang and Belarus be tests of this administration’s approach to the council. But the White House must not put much trust into this corrupted institution. We should be uniting like-minded democracies around actions that the United Nations panels are either unwilling or unable to take. With respect to Hong Kong, the prior administration took several concrete steps, from closing PRC investment loopholes in Hong Kong to opposing targeted sanctions.

Now is the time for the Biden administration to show its resolve as it confronts serious tests of its own.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MAIDEN SPEECH

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Madam President, I rise today to speak on the Senate floor for the first time as a U.S. Senator from the great State of Alabama.

I want to share some thoughts on how we can work together as a team to improve the lives of our constituents and to provide more opportunity for the next generation of Americans, but before I begin, I want to take a moment to thank the people of Alabama.

For the last 2 years, I have traveled the State, from Mobile to Muscle Shoals, from the Wiregrass to Lake Guntersville, and many places in between. I talked to folks from all walks of life. Mostly, I listened, which is something we can all do better. I listened to people’s hopes, and I listened to their concerns. I heard what they thought was going right in our country and State and what they thought was going wrong, and even after being a football coach my entire career, working day and night, running for the Senate was still the hardest thing I have ever done, but I enjoyed every minute.

In the end, I asked the people of Alabama to trust me with the responsibility of representing them here in Washington, and they did. It is humbling. It is an opportunity to serve my country that I respect, cherish, and

will always honor. My staff and I will work hard every day to live up to that trust.

Like the Presiding Officer, my constituents sent me to Washington to represent them and to help make their lives better. I recognize we all have our differences, but we are all on the same team. We have got an offense and a defense, but at the end of the day, we are still on the same team. One of the things we can do together as a team is to create more opportunity for more people. In my view, that starts with education.

I have been an educator, a coach, and a mentor to young people for 40 years. I recruited 18- to 19-year-olds from all over the country and all walks of life. I saw how they lived. I was a father figure to hundreds of young men who had one or no parents. I coached young people from all backgrounds—rich, poor, and everybody in between. I mentored young people of all races, religions, and economic backgrounds.

As someone who has had a chance to travel across the country and this globe for my career, I have seen how other people live. One thing I have learned is that education is the key to freedom—the key to freedom—the freedom to live the life you want. I have seen firsthand how education can give you a leg up and a way out. It is a way to achieve the American dream. When we empower our young people with a quality education, we give them the gift of an opportunity, the greatest gift our country can give our citizens. And what I found out as a coach is that, when people are given an opportunity to better themselves, they usually take it.

I think I can safely say I have been in more public schools than any Senator ever. Too often, I have found that we are failing our young people by not providing the quality education they deserve. It is not about money; it is about people; it is about what we value and what we teach. Improving education in this country should be one of the, if not the top, priorities we have. That is why I am proud to be a new member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. On the HELP Committee, we need to work together as a team to do three things.

First, we need to recognize that parents and teachers know how to best educate our young people in their communities because we are all different. The Federal Government does not need to tell parents in Alabama how to teach their kids. We don’t need a one-size-fits-all education curriculum. What works in San Francisco will not necessarily work in Scottsboro, AL.

Second, we should recognize that education takes many forms. Not every student in America needs to go to a 4-year college or university. To ensure our country remains competitive in the 21st century, we need to promote STEM education to those students who have an interest in math and science,

but to remain strong, this country also needs welders, plumbers, nurses, equipment operators, electricians, and craftsmen. These are jobs that have excellent pay and great futures. If the Democrats want to pass a massive infrastructure bill, they need to first ask: Who is going to build it? That is why I will be looking for any opportunity to support career technical programs that prepare a skilled workforce. Our goal should be to restore America to a country that makes things again.

No. 3, we have got to start teaching our young people moral values again. That starts with putting God and prayer back in our schools. Our kids need structure, and they need to learn right from wrong. I have watched everything that has happened in education over the past few decades from a front-row seat on my sideline as a coach. It is embarrassing. As a person who chooses to spend their career in education, I now have the opportunity to say something as a U.S. Senator.

Our young people are our No. 1 hope for this country’s future. If we don’t recognize that, we are going to lose our country as we know it. As of 2018, the United States is 13th in the world for reading, 18th for science, and we are 36th in the world for math. That is unacceptable.

This country was built on hard work. It was built on competition, whether it is business or individual. Education and athletics teach you how to compete, how to have grit, determination, and to work together as a team. Now, you can learn everything you want from books, but if you don’t learn to persevere and compete, it is hard to succeed.

Some people in this country think that you are owed something simply because you live in the United States of America. This country doesn’t owe you a job or a paycheck. This country only owes you one thing, and that is an opportunity, but what is great about this country is that it also gives you the opportunity to fail. That might sound a little funny coming from a football coach who spent his entire career trying to win, but here, if you fail, this country will give you a chance to get back on your feet and try to succeed again and again. You don’t get that opportunity in most countries on God’s green Earth.

That being said, I appreciate the opportunity to serve with Chairwoman MURRAY and Ranking Member BURR, and I look forward to getting down to work and returning education to one of our top priorities.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.